

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 A fuel filter suitable for filtering diesel fuel comprising:

5 - a filter housing comprising a filter head and a housing enclosure, a fuel inlet and a fuel outlet arranged on the filter housing, and a water accumulation chamber which communicates with a water outlet provided in the housing enclosure,

10 - a cylindrical filter element installed in the filter housing such that an unfiltered side of the filter which communicates with the fuel inlet is sealingly separated from a filtered side of the filter which communicates with the fuel outlet,

15 - a water discharge valve at said water outlet, with an actuator for opening the water discharge valve from outside the filter,

- wherein said actuator is connected to the filter head on the one hand and the water outlet on the other hand.

20 2. A fuel filter according to claim 1, further comprising a water sensor arranged in the filter housing.

25 3. A fuel filter according to claim 1, wherein said actuator extends through a filter interior formed by the cylindrical filter element.

30 4. A fuel filter according to claim 1, wherein axial displacement of the actuator opens the water outlet.

5. A fuel filter according to claim 4, wherein the water outlet is opened by pulling on the actuator.

6. A fuel filter according to claim 4, further comprising a drive unit for moving said actuator.

7. A fuel filter according to claim 1, further
5 comprising means for arresting said actuator to prevent
unintended opening of the discharge valve.

8. A fuel filter according to claim 2, wherein the water sensor is connected to a control unit, which in turn is connected to a drive unit for said actuator, such that the actuator is actuated and the discharge valve opened automatically to release water from the filter housing when the water sensor senses that a predetermined amount of water has accumulated in the water accumulation chamber.